

REMARKS

The final Office Action mailed January 16, 2007 has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment is made in consequence thereof.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies extended to Applicants' representative by Examiner Stinson during the telephone interview on March 20, 2007. Applicants' record of the substance of the telephone interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

During the telephone interview, Applicants' representative discussed the recitations of pending Claims 1, 2, 4-12 and 14-20 with respect to the drawings, as supported by the specification. Examiner Stinson asserted that the current claim amendments appear to overcome the rejections based on Yoshikawa, Kanai and/or Brucken. However, Examiner Stinson asserted that further search and/or consideration is required. Because the outstanding Office Action is final, Examiner Stinson suggested that Applicants file a Request for Continued Examination with an Amendment incorporating such claim amendments in response to the outstanding Office Action.

Claims 1, 2, 4-12 and 14-20 are now pending in this application. Claims 1, 2, 4-12 and 14-20 stand rejected. Claims 3 and 13 have been canceled without prejudice, waiver, or disclaimer.

The rejection of Claims 1, 2, 4-12 and 14-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent Reference No. 407068085 to Yoshikawa et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Yoshikawa") in view of either Japanese Patent Reference No. 354102663 to Kanai et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Kanai") or U.S. Patent No. 3,603,118 to Brucken (hereinafter referred to as "Brucken") is respectfully traversed.

Yoshikawa describes a washing machine having a spin-drying tub (2) with horizontal and vertical reinforcing ribs (2a). The reinforcing ribs (2a) form an integrated mesh in grid-form that surrounds the tub (2). (See Figure 1). As indicated on pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that the tub (2) includes an outer wall, i.e., grooves (2c), and a rib having a face and opposing side walls coupled at each circumferential end of the face. The Examiner also asserts that the tub (2) includes a support band, i.e., rib (2a). Notably, the ribs (2a) are coupled circumferentially outside of a channel area defined by the face and opposing side walls of the rib as described by the Examiner.

As shown in Figures 1 and 6, an outer peripheral surface part (2d) is positioned within a channel defined by the rib described by the Examiner. Notably, the outer peripheral surface part (2d) extends circumferentially from an outer surface of the grooves (2c). Moreover, the outer peripheral surface part (2d) does not extend radially inward from the groove outer surface and is not vertically spaced such that portions of the rib described by the Examiner are hollow between adjacent outer peripheral surface parts (2d) and solid at the outer peripheral surface parts (2d) from the rib face and opposing sides to the grooves (2c).

Kanai describes a dewatering drum (16) made of synthetic resin. The drum (16) includes a cylindrical sidewall (40) made from cylindrical parts (44) and arc formed parts (42) that project inward. The parts (42, 44) are coupled in a monocoque form to reduce deformation of the tub. The drum includes circular ribs (46) that are only positioned at or over the arc formed parts (42). Notably, the ribs (46) do not include substantially planar side walls. Moreover, as shown in Figure 2, the circular ribs (46) do not include different cross-sections.

Brucken describes a clothes washer having an outer tub assembly and an inner tub assembly. The inner tub assembly (14) has an outer wall (112) that forms inwardly directed tub ribs (120). The tub ribs (120) start at a point (121) below the top of the outer wall (112) and taper in a vertical direction as the ribs move downward along the outer wall (112). At the bottom of each tub rib (120), the rib (120) merges smoothly with the outer wall (112). Notably, Brucken does not describe a support for the ribs (120) or that the ribs (120) include hollow portions.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Section 103 rejection of the presently pending claims is not a proper rejection. As is well established, obviousness cannot be established by combining the teachings of the cited art to produce the claimed invention, absent some teaching, suggestion, or incentive supporting the combination. None of Yoshikawa, Kanai and Brucken, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests the claimed combination. Further, in contrast to the Examiner's assertion within the Office Action, Applicants respectfully submit that it would not be obvious to one skilled in the art to combine Yoshikawa with either Kanai or Brucken, because there is no motivation to combine the references suggested in the art. In fact, Yoshikawa, the primary reference, teaches away from adding a plurality of circumferential support bands extending outwardly from the ribs to

a position substantially flush with the outer surface. Yoshikawa teaches that the platform sides of the tub wall must deform (i.e., bend or stretch outward) in order to expand the wall. (See Figures 3 and 7). Further, Yoshikawa does not describe or suggest a plurality of circumferential support bands but an integrated mesh in grid-form that surrounds the tub.

Moreover, the Examiner has not pointed to any prior art that teaches or suggests to combine the disclosures, other than Applicants' own teaching. Rather, only the conclusory statement that "it therefore would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to modify the ribs of [Yoshikawa]...for the purpose of providing a greater turn-over of the clothes being washed."

Since there is no teaching or suggestion in the cited art for the combination, the Section 103 rejection appears to be based on a hindsight reconstruction in which isolated disclosures have been picked and chosen in an attempt to deprecate the present invention. Of course, such a combination is impermissible, and for this reason alone, Applicants request that the Section 103 rejection be withdrawn.

Moreover, and to the extent understood, none of Yoshikawa, Kanai and Brucken, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests the claimed invention. Specifically, Claim 1 recites a basket for a washing machine. The basket includes "a body comprising an outer peripheral wall and at least one rib extending radially inward from said outer peripheral wall, said rib comprising at least a first portion having a first cross section and a second portion having a second cross section, said second cross section different from said first cross section, said outer peripheral wall including a plurality of apertures therethrough, said apertures arranged in single vertically aligned columns between adjacent ribs; wherein said rib comprises a face and substantially planar opposing sides extending from said face, said basket further comprising a plurality of supports, each of said plurality of supports extending radially outward from said face toward said outer peripheral wall, and extending between said opposing sides of said rib such that each said support is substantially flush with said outer peripheral wall, said plurality of supports spaced apart in a direction substantially parallel to a rotational axis of said basket such that portions of said rib are hollow between adjacent supports and solid at said supports from said face and said opposing sides to said outer peripheral wall."

None of Yoshikawa, Kanai and Brucken, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a basket including a rib that includes a face and substantially planar opposing sides extending from said face, the basket further including a plurality of supports, each of the plurality of supports extending radially outward from the face toward an outer peripheral wall, and extending between opposing sides of the rib such that each support is substantially flush with the outer peripheral wall, and the plurality of supports spaced apart in a direction that is substantially parallel to a rotational axis of the basket such that portions of the rib are hollow between adjacent supports and solid at the supports from the face and the opposing sides to the outer peripheral wall, as required by Applicants' claimed invention. Rather, Yoshikawa describes raised platforms with reinforcing struts (2a) that do not extend between the sides of the platform. Kanai describes arc formed parts (42) that project inside the ribs (46) but does not describe or suggest supports that extend between the sides of the ribs. Brucken merely describes a tapered rib molded with a tub wall. The rib in Brucken could not include a rib support as recited in Claim 1.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Yoshikawa in view of either Kanai or Brucken.

Claims 2, 4 and 5 depend from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 2, 4 and 5 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 2, 4 and 5 are likewise patentable over Yoshikawa in view of either Kanai or Brucken.

Claim 6 recites a washing machine basket including "an outer peripheral wall having an outer surface; a plurality of ribs projecting radially inwardly from said outer peripheral wall, each said rib comprising a face and substantially planar opposing sides extending from said face, and a first end and a second end, said first end projecting a first radial distance from said outer peripheral wall, said second end projecting a second radial distance from said outer peripheral wall, said first radial distance less than said second radial distance; a plurality of apertures formed in said outer peripheral wall, said apertures arranged in single vertically aligned columns between adjacent ribs; and a plurality of supports each extending radially outwardly from said face toward said outer peripheral wall, and extending between said opposing sides of said rib such that each said support is substantially flush with said outer surface, said plurality of supports spaced apart in a direction substantially parallel to a

rotational axis of said basket such that portions of said rib are hollow between adjacent supports and solid at said supports from said face and said opposing sides to said outer peripheral wall.”

None of Yoshikawa, Kanai and Brucken, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a washing machine basket as recited in Claim 6. More specifically, none of Yoshikawa, Kanai and Brucken, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a basket including a rib that includes a face and substantially planar opposing sides extending from the face, the basket further including a plurality of supports, each of the plurality of supports extending radially outward from the face toward an outer peripheral wall, and extending between opposing sides of the rib such that each support is substantially flush with the outer peripheral wall, and the plurality of supports spaced apart in a direction that is substantially parallel to a rotational axis of the basket such that portions of the rib are hollow between adjacent supports and solid at the supports from the face and the opposing sides to the outer peripheral wall, as required by Applicants’ claimed invention. Rather, Yoshikawa describes raised platforms with reinforcing struts (2a) that do not extend between the sides of the platform. Kanai describes arc formed parts (42) that project inside the ribs (46) but does not describe or suggest supports that extend between the sides of the ribs. Brucken merely describes a tapered rib molded with a tub wall. The rib in Brucken could not include a rib support.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 6 is submitted to be patentable over Yoshikawa in view of either Kanai or Brucken.

Claims 7-9 depend from independent Claim 6. When the recitations of Claims 7-9 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 6, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 7-9 are likewise patentable over Yoshikawa in view of either Kanai or Brucken.

Claim 10 recites a washing machine basket including “an outer peripheral wall and a plurality of vertically extending ribs projecting radially inwardly from said outer peripheral wall at a distance of about 0.395 to about 1.5 inches, said outer peripheral wall including a plurality of apertures therethrough, said apertures arranged in single vertically aligned columns between adjacent ribs; and wherein each said rib comprises a face and substantially planar opposing sides extending from said face, said basket further comprising a plurality of supports, each of said plurality of supports extending radially outward from said face toward

said outer peripheral wall, and extending between said opposing sides of said rib such that each said support is substantially flush with said outer peripheral wall, said plurality of supports spaced apart in a direction substantially parallel to a rotational axis of said basket such that portions of said rib are hollow between adjacent supports and solid at said supports from said face and said opposing sides to said outer peripheral wall.”

None of Yoshikawa, Kanai and Brucken, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a washing machine basket as recited in Claim 10. More specifically, none of Yoshikawa, Kanai and Brucken, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a basket including a rib that includes a face and substantially planar opposing sides extending from said face, the basket further including a plurality of supports, each of the plurality of supports extending radially outward from the face toward an outer peripheral wall, and extending between opposing sides of the rib such that each support is substantially flush with the outer peripheral wall, and the plurality of supports spaced apart in a direction substantially parallel to a rotational axis of the basket such that portions of the rib are hollow between adjacent supports and solid at the supports from the face and the opposing sides to the outer peripheral wall, as required by Applicants’ claimed invention. Rather, Yoshikawa describes raised platforms with reinforcing struts (2a) that do not extend between the sides of the platform. Kanai describes arc formed parts (42) that project inside the ribs (46) but does not describe or suggest supports that extend between the sides of the ribs. Brucken merely describes a tapered rib molded with a tub wall. The rib in Brucken could not include a rib support.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 10 is submitted to be patentable over Yoshikawa in view of either Kanai or Brucken.

Claims 11-12 and 14-15 depend from independent Claim 10. When the recitations of Claims 11-12 and 14-15 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 10, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 11-12 and 14-15 are likewise patentable over Yoshikawa in view of either Kanai or Brucken.

Claim 16 recites a washing machine basket including “a substantially cylindrical outer peripheral wall and a plurality of inwardly projecting ribs depending therefrom, each said rib comprising: a first portion having a first radially extending height from said outer peripheral wall and a first tangential width; and a second portion having a second radially extending

height from said outer peripheral wall and a second tangential width, said first height less than said second height, said first width greater than said second width; wherein, said outer peripheral wall includes a plurality of apertures therethrough, said apertures arranged in single vertically aligned columns between adjacent ribs; and wherein said rib comprises a face and substantially planar opposing sides extending from said face, said basket further comprising a plurality of supports, each of said plurality of supports extending radially outward from said face toward said outer peripheral wall, and extending between said opposing sides of said rib such that each said support is substantially flush with said outer peripheral wall, said plurality of supports spaced apart in a direction substantially parallel to a rotational axis of said basket such that portions of said rib are hollow between adjacent supports and solid at said supports from said face and said opposing sides to said outer peripheral wall.”

None of Yoshikawa, Kanai and Brucken, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a washing machine basket as recited in Claim 16. More specifically, none of Yoshikawa, Kanai and Brucken, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a basket including a basket including a rib that includes a face and substantially planar opposing sides extending from said face, the basket further including a plurality of supports, each of the supports including a face extending radially outward from a rib face, extending radially inward from an outer wall, and extending between opposing sides of the rib such that each support is substantially flush with the outer wall, and the supports spaced apart in a vertical direction that is substantially parallel to a vertical rotational axis of the basket such that portions of the rib are hollow between adjacent supports and solid at the supports from the face and the opposing sides to the outer wall, as required by Applicants’ claimed invention. Rather, Yoshikawa describes raised platforms with reinforcing struts (2a) that do not extend between the sides of the platform. Kanai describes arc formed parts (42) that project inside the ribs (46) but does not describe or suggest supports that extend between the sides of the ribs. Brucken merely describes a tapered rib molded with a tub wall. The rib in Brucken could not include a rib support.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 16 is submitted to be patentable over Yoshikawa in view of either Kanai or Brucken.

Claims 17-18 depend from independent Claim 16. When the recitations of Claims 17-18 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 16, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 17-18 are likewise patentable over Yoshikawa in view of either Kanai or Brucken.

Claim 19 recites a washing machine including “a cabinet; and a basket rotatably mounted in said cabinet, said basket comprising an outer peripheral wall and a plurality of radially inwardly projecting ribs extending from said outer peripheral wall, said ribs having a varying width between ends thereof, said basket further including a plurality of apertures therethrough, said apertures arranged in single vertically aligned columns between adjacent ribs; and wherein each said rib comprises a face and substantially planar opposing sides extending from said face, said basket further comprising a plurality of supports, each of said plurality of supports extending radially outward from said face toward said outer peripheral wall, and extending between said opposing sides of said rib such that each said support is substantially flush with said outer peripheral wall, said plurality of supports spaced apart in a direction substantially parallel to a rotational axis of said basket such that portions of said rib are hollow between adjacent supports and solid at said supports from said face and said opposing sides to said outer peripheral wall.”

None of Yoshikawa, Kanai and Brucken, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a washing machine as recited in Claim 19. More specifically, none of Yoshikawa, Kanai and Brucken, considered alone or in combination, describes or suggests a basket including a rib that includes a face and substantially planar opposing sides extending from said face, the basket further including a plurality of supports, each of the plurality of supports including a face extending radially outward from the face toward an outer peripheral wall, and extending between opposing sides of the rib such that each support is substantially flush with the outer peripheral wall, and the plurality of supports spaced apart in a direction substantially parallel to a rotational axis of the basket such that portions of the rib are hollow between adjacent supports and solid at the supports from the face and the opposing sides to the outer peripheral wall, as required by Applicants' claimed invention. Rather, Yoshikawa describes raised platforms with reinforcing struts (2a) that do not extend between the sides of the platform. Kanai describes arc formed parts (42) that project inside the ribs (46) but does not describe or suggest supports that extend between the sides of the ribs. Brucken merely

describes a tapered rib molded with a tub wall. The rib in Brucken could not include a rib support.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 19 is submitted to be patentable over Yoshikawa in view of either Kanai or Brucken.

Claim 20 depends from independent Claim 19. When the recitations of Claim 20 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 19, Applicants submit that dependent Claim 20 is likewise patentable over Yoshikawa in view of either Kanai or Brucken.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 1, 2, 4-12 and 14-20 be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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